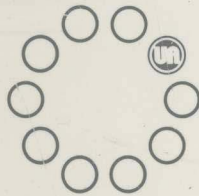# a handbook of structured experiences for human relations training

volume

X

edited by
J. William Pfeiffer

University Associates Publishers and Consultants

A Handbook of
Structured
Experiences
for
Human
Relations
Training

Volume X

Edited by

J. WILLIAM PFEIFFER, Ph.D., J.D.

UNIVERSITY ASSOCIATES
Publishers and Consultants
8517 Production Avenue
San Diego, California 92121

SERIES IN HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

PREFACE

The tenth volume of the *Handbook* series has proved to be as interesting a project as its predecessors. Innovative structured experiences continue to be submitted, and I remain impressed with the work being done by group facilitators in this country and abroad.

The twenty-four structured experiences in this volume address a variety of training topics and issues. As in the earlier volumes, most of the twenty-four are new; a few are new variations of training designs that will allow you to incorporate fresh content into some of your favorites. Care has been taken in the selection of all twenty-four to ensure that they offer ways to help participants to increase their understanding of the world in which they live and work.

We at University Associates continue to hold the professional value that resources should be shared by peers. The *Handbooks of Structured Experiences for Human Relations Training* are one important evidence of this belief. We invite users to participate in this process through feedback suggestions. All of the materials in the *Handbooks* may be freely reproduced for educational or training purposes. For large-scale distribution or the inclusion of materials in publications for sale, prior written permission is required.

I would like to express my appreciation to the colleagues who have contributed to this volume and to the expert editorial system that produced it. I particularly wish to thank Beverly Byrum, facilitator and content consultant; Mary Kitzmiller, managing editor; Carol Nolde, senior editor; and Jacqueline Pickett, typographer.

<div style="text-align: right;">J. William Pfeiffer</div>

San Diego, California
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INTRODUCTION

Our early work in creating learning designs led us to the use of what had always been termed "exercises," "techniques," or "games." When we made the decision to gather these valuable materials into a book, we became concerned that "exercise" and "game" had connotations we considered dysfunctional to the intent of their use. We therefore elected to call them "structured experiences" to indicate that they are designed for experience-based learning.

Our interest in providing participants with a distinctive design for human relations training has resulted in an increasing orientation in our consulting activities and workshops toward experiences that produce generally predictable outcomes. In designing human relations training experiences, we strive to become aware of and to examine the specific needs of the client system or particular group and then develop learning situations that will meet those needs. Based on an experiential model, structured experiences are inductive rather than deductive, providing *direct* rather than vicarious learnings. Thus, participants *discover* meaning for themselves and *validate* their own experience.

A variety of experiential learning models have been developed in recent years (see Palmer, 1981). Our own version has five steps that occur in a cycle:

The *experiencing* phase involves some activity such as fantasy, dyadic sharing, or group problem solving. If the model stopped at this point, however, training

would be only "fun and games." Next the participants engage in *publishing* their reactions to and observations of the activity. This is the data-generation phase; it leads logically into *processing*. It is our belief that processing is the key to the potency of structured experiences, and it is important that the facilitator allow sufficient time for this step. If the training is to transfer to the "real world," it is important for the participants to be able to extrapolate the experience from a laboratory setting to the outside world through *generalizing*. In this phase participants develop principles, hypotheses, and generalizations that can be discussed in the final phase, *applying*. This final phase must not be left to chance; facilitators need to ensure that participants recognize the relevance of the learning. The actual application of behavior becomes a new experience and begins the cycle again.

There is no successful way to cut short this cycle. If structured experiences are to be effective, the facilitator must supply adequate opportunities for "talk-through." The payoff comes when the participants learn *useful* things that they take responsibility for applying.

Thus, a concern that we bring to all our training publications is the need for adequate processing of the training experience so that participants are able to integrate the learning without the stress generated by unresolved feelings about the experience. It is at this point that the expertise of the facilitator becomes crucial if the experience is to be responsive to the learning and emotional needs of the participants. The facilitator must judge whether he or she will be able successfully to process the data that probably will emerge in the group through the structured experience. Any facilitator, regardless of background, who is committed to the growth of individuals in the group can usefully employ structured experiences.

The choice of a particular activity must be made using two criteria: the facilitator's competence and the participants' needs. It is the responsibility of the facilitator to examine his or her own expertise as well as the specific needs and the level of sophistication of the group involved. Adaptability and flexibility are, therefore, emphasized in the design of the structured experiences in this volume. The variations listed after each structured experience suggest possible alterations that a facilitator may wish to incorporate in order to make the experience more suitable to the particular design and to the needs of the participants. The expected norm in human relations training is innovation.

Our use of and experimentation with structured experiences led us to an interest in developing useful, uncomplicated questionnaires, opinionnaires, and other instruments. It is our belief that instruments enhance and reinforce the learning from structured experiences. Instruments also provide feedback to the facilitator on the appropriateness of the activity and the effectiveness of the presentation.

Some instruments appeared in the first volumes of the *Handbooks* and have subsequently been revised and refined in later editions. Each volume of the *Handbook* contains structured experiences that include instruments. We find that the complementary selection of structured experiences and instruments can create powerful learning environments for participants, and we encourage those involved

in the field of human resource development to become acquainted with this two-fold approach in providing for participants' learning needs. In addition, Volume X includes lecturette content whenever a lecturette is part of the design of a structured experience.

At the end of each structured experience in this volume are any appropriate cross-references to similar structured experiences, suggested instruments, and/or lecturette sources. The number of each supplemental or complementary structured experience and the publication in which it appears are indicated. Instruments and lecturettes are listed by title, publication, and page number. Space for notes on each structured experience has been provided for the convenience of the facilitator.

The sequencing of structured experiences in Volume X is different from that of the previous volumes of the *Handbook*. The sequence in Volumes I through IX is based on the amount of understanding, skill, and experience needed by the facilitator to use each experience effectively. In each of those volumes, therefore, the first structured experience requires much less background on the part of the facilitator than does the last. In Volume X the order of structured experiences has been changed to reflect their classification into categories according to their focus and intent. A listing of these categories can be found on page 155 in this book; an explanation of the categorization scheme can be found in the "User's Guide" to *The Structured Experience Kit,* in the section entitled "Classification of Structured Experiences" in the *Reference Guide to Handbooks and Annuals,* and in the "Introduction to the Structured Experiences Section" of the 1981 *Annual.* This category system was developed for *The Structured Experience Kit,* which contains structured experiences from all volumes of the *Handbook* and all volumes of the *Annual.* One feature of the *Kit* is that each experience has been rated according to (a) how much affect is likely to be generated, (b) how structurally complex the design is, and (c) how difficult the activity is to process.

Our published structured experiences are numbered consecutively throughout the series of *Handbooks* and *Annuals,* in order of publication of the volumes. The contents of the entire series of *Handbooks* and *Annuals* are fully indexed in the *Reference Guide to Handbooks and Annuals.* The *Reference Guide* is an indispensable aid in locating a particular structured experience or a structured experience for a particular purpose, as well as related instruments, lecturettes, and theory articles.

The purpose, then, of the *Handbooks* is to share further the training materials that we have found to be useful in training designs. Some of the experiences that appear here originated within University Associates, and some were submitted to us by facilitators in the field. It is gratifying to find that facilitators around the world are using the *Handbooks* and concur with our philosophy that sharing these valuable materials with others is far more in the spirit of human relations theory than the stagnating concept of "ownership" of ideas.

Users are encouraged to submit structured experiences, instruments they have developed, and papers they have written that might be of interest to practitioners

in human resource development. In this manner, our Series in Human Resource Development will continue to serve as a clearinghouse for ideas developed by group facilitators.

REFERENCE

Palmer, A. Learning cycles: Models of behavioral change. In J. E. Jones & J. W. Pfeiffer (Eds.), *The 1981 annual handbook for group facilitators*. San Diego, CA: University Associates, 1981.

389. ALOHA: A FEEDBACK EXPERIENCE

Goals

    I. To offer the participants an opportunity to give and receive feedback about their strengths and opportunities for improvement in interpersonal relations.

    II. To provide closure at the end of an experiential-learning event.

Group Size

    Any number of groups of approximately five to eight participants each. (The composition of each group should be the same as that used throughout the experiential-learning event.)

Time Required

    Approximately forty-five minutes.

Materials

    A tennis ball for each group.

Physical Setting

    A room with a movable chair for each participant.

Process

    I. The facilitator begins by saying that Hawaii is nicknamed "the Aloha State" and that many visitors to Hawaii have learned about the spirit of aloha. The participants are told that the word "aloha" means "hello" and "good-by" and implies a wish for hope, love, peace, happiness, and friendship. The facilitator explains that the final group session will be based on the spirit of aloha and the giving and receiving of feedback, all of which are particularly appropriate when an experiential-learning event is being completed and the participants are meeting for the last time.

    II. The participants are asked to assemble into their customary groups, and the members of each group are asked to be seated in a circle. The facilitator explains that he or she will toss a tennis ball to one member of each group in order to start the process. The group member who has received the tennis ball will be the first to receive feedback from each of his or her fellow

members. The facilitator stipulates that the feedback is to focus on the recipient's strengths in interpersonal relations as well as areas in interpersonal relations that the recipient might want to consider as opportunities for growth and improvement. The facilitator further explains that the recipient is to listen to all feedback without comment, except when clarification is needed. When all feedback has been given, the recipient is to toss the tennis ball to another member, without announcing beforehand who the new recipient will be. Subsequently, this process is to be repeated until all of the participants have received feedback from all of their fellow group members. After explaining the procedure, the facilitator tosses a tennis ball to one member in each group and asks the participants to begin. (Twenty-five minutes.)

III. When the feedback process has been completed, the facilitator elicits any other comments that the participants would like to make. Then the members of each group are instructed to say "aloha" to one another in any way they wish before leaving the session. The participants are also encouraged to repeat the "aloha" process with members of other groups as well.

Variations

I. Leis may be substituted for the tennis balls. In this case the facilitator places a lei around the neck of one member in each group to begin the feedback process; when all feedback has been given, the recipient removes the lei and places it around the neck of another member, who becomes the next recipient of feedback.

II. In Step III the facilitator may point out that the Hawaiian word "ohana" means a tightly knit, small group and that the participants may want to express to one another what their experiences in their small groups have meant to them throughout the course of the experiential-learning event.

III. In Step III each group member may be given a flower. One member puts his or her flower in the center of the circle and shares a sentiment about the group as a whole. Then the other members take turns completing this process.

Similar Structured Experiences: *'75 Annual:* Structured Experience **146;** *'78 Annual:* **225;** *Vol. IX:* **355.**

Submitted by Thomas H. Patten, Jr.

Notes on the Use of "Aloha":

390. I AM, DON'T YOU THINK?: ZODIAC FEEDBACK

Goals

    I. To assist the participants in gaining insight about themselves and about their fellow group members.

    II. To provide the participants with an opportunity to compare their self-perceptions with others' perceptions of them.

    III. To heighten the participants' awareness of the ways in which a variety of member characteristics can enrich a group.

Group Size

    Two or three groups (a maximum of thirty participants). The members of each group should be acquainted with one another.

Time Required

    Approximately two hours.

Materials

    I. A copy of the I Am, Don't You Think? Characteristics Sheet for each participant.

    II. A copy of the I Am, Don't You Think? Zodiac Key for each participant.

    III. A copy of the I Am, Don't You Think? Zodiac Signs Handout for each participant.

    IV. A copy of the I Am, Don't You Think? Discussion Sheet for each participant.

    V. A pencil for each participant.

    VI. For each participant, enough 3″ x 5″ index cards to equal the number of other members in that participant's group. (For example, if there are six members in one group, each member of that group receives five 3″ x 5″ cards.)

Physical Setting

    A room with chairs and writing surfaces for the participants.

Process

I. The facilitator introduces the goals of the activity and asks the participants to assemble into their groups.

II. Each participant is given a copy of the characteristics sheet and a pencil and is asked to read all forty-eight characteristics listed on this sheet. After the participants have finished reading, the facilitator instructs each participant to work independently to select the *ten* characteristics that describe himself or herself best and to place a check mark in the "My Opinion" column beside each of these ten. (Fifteen minutes.)

III. The facilitator gives each participant the appropriate number of 3 " x 5 " index cards. Each participant is instructed to consider each of the other group members in turn, to write this person's name on one of the 3 " x 5 " cards, to select *four* characteristics from the sheet that best describe this person, and to write the *numbers* of these four characteristics on the card below the person's name. The participants are asked not to consult one another while they complete this task. (Twenty minutes.)

IV. After each participant has completed a card for every other member of his or her group, the facilitator asks the participants to distribute their cards to the people whose names appear on the cards. Then the participants are instructed to go through their cards one by one; each participant is told to refer to the characteristics sheet and to tally the contents of the received cards by placing a tick mark in the "Others' Opinions" column to indicate each time a specific characteristic is noted by number.

V. Each participant is instructed to write the number of matches between the self-assessments and others' assessments in the appropriate places in the "Number of Matches" column, to determine his or her score, to write it in the blank provided, and to determine the consistency between the self-assessments and others' assessments.

VI. The facilitator distributes copies of the zodiac key and asks each participant to compare his or her matches with the characteristics that are representative of his or her sign.

VII. Each participant is given a copy of the zodiac signs handout and is instructed to read the entire list of characteristics for his or her sign. In addition, the facilitator distributes copies of the discussion sheet and asks the members of each group to read and follow the instructions on this sheet and to select one member to lead them in their discussion. (Forty-five minutes.)

VIII. The facilitator reassembles the total group and leads a concluding discussion about the ways in which the participants can use what they have learned to improve their interaction with their fellow group members.

Variations

I. The participants may be encouraged to give and receive additional feedback about characteristics they especially like in their fellow group members, characteristics that their fellow members might want to emphasize more, and/or characteristics that they would like to develop for personal growth.

II. The zodiac model may be eliminated, and the participants may be asked simply to complete the characteristics sheet and to provide one another with feedback.

Similar Structured Experiences: *Volume III:* Structured Experience **58;** *'78 Annual:* **225.**

Suggested Instruments: *'80 Annual,* p. 89: "Personal Style Inventory"; *Vol. IX,* p. 61: "Personality Traits Inventory."

Notes on the Use of "I Am, Don't You Think?":

Submitted by Jane C. Bryant.

I AM, DON'T YOU THINK? CHARACTERISTICS SHEET

Characteristic	My Opinion	Others' Opinions	Number of Matches
1. is determined, ambitious			
2. assesses situations quickly			
3. thrives on constant activity			
4. possesses a firm sense of values; is trustworthy			
5. has strong nurturing instincts			
6. has a sense of discipline and purpose			
7. has a progressive outlook			
8. is independent; needs privacy			
9. has an ability to relieve the suffering of others			
10. has a pioneering, adventurous spirit			
11. exhibits considerable interest in health and hygiene			
12. likes to have power and authority			
13. is refined, diplomatic, tactful			
14. is brave, with little regard for danger			
15. is good at coping with life			
16. pursues causes; is often in favor of change			
17. has leadership ability			
18. is idealistic; shows strong sense of justice			
19. has excellent business sense			
20. is a generous, loving, devoted friend			
21. is a nonconformist			